

Docket No. 500.42938X00
Serial No. 10/618,749
Office Action dated November 1, 2007

REMARKS

I. Introduction

By the present Amendment, claims 1-8, 10, 16, and 17 have been amended. Claims 18-20 have been cancelled, without any prejudice or disclaimer to the subject matter recited therein. Accordingly, claims 1-8, 10, 16, and 17 remain pending in the application. Claims 1, 6, and 10 are independent.

II. Office Action Summary

In the Office Action of November 1, 2007, claim 17 was objected to under 37 CFR §1.75(c) as being of improper dependent form. Claims 1, 8, 10, 18, and 20 were rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,963,358 issued to Cohen et al. ("Cohen") in view of U.S. Patent No. 7,248,285 in view of Needham. Claims 2-7, 16-17, and 19 were rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Cohen in view of Needham, and further in view of U.S. Patent Application No. 2002/0101519 to Myers.

The cancellation of claims 18-20 has rendered part of these grounds of rejection moot. Regarding the remaining claims, these rejections are respectfully traversed.

III. Claim Objections

Claim 17 was objected to under 37 CFR §1.75(c) as being of improper dependent form for failing to further limit the subject matter of a previous claim. Regarding this objection, the Office Action alleges that all of the limitations recited in claim 17 are present in claim 6, from which claim 17 depends.

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By the present Amendment, Applicants have amended independent claim 6, in part, to address this objection by removing the limitation that is later recited in claim 17. Accordingly, claim 17 now further limits the subject matter of independent claim 6.

Withdrawal of this objection is therefore respectfully requested.

IV. Rejections under 35 USC §103

Claims 1, 8, 10, 18, and 20 were rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Cohen in view of Needham. Regarding this rejection, the Office Action indicates that Cohen discloses the use of a camera system having a portable device and a camera. The portable device allegedly includes a receiver unit to receive image data, a writer unit, a memory unit, and a transmitter unit to automatically transmit a capture signal to camera without user input. The Office Action further alleges that the camera includes a receiver unit, and a transmitter unit to transmit the photographed image data to the portable device. The Office Action admits that Cohen fails to explicitly disclose the memory unit storing an ID for identification of the portable device and transmitting the ID to the camera at intervals of a constant time. Needham is relied upon for disclosing these additional features. Applicants respectfully disagree.

As amended, independent claim 1 now defines a camera system having a plurality of portable devices and a fixed camera. According to independent claim 1:

each of the portable devices comprising:
a receiver unit to receive image data photographed by the
fixed camera;
a writer unit to write the received image data in a memory
medium;

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a memory unit to store an ID for identification of each of the portable devices;

a transmitter unit to automatically transmit the ID to the fixed camera without user input, at intervals of constant time; and

a transmit turn-off unit to stop the transmitter unit from automatically transmitting the ID to the fixed camera without user input, in response to a user operation;

the fixed camera comprising:

a receiver unit to receive the ID from the portable devices;

an image pick-up unit to start image pick-up operation when receiving the ID; and

a transmitter unit to transmit the photographed image data to each of the portable devices.

According to independent claim 1, each of the portable devices includes a receiver unit to receive image data that is photographed by the fixed camera, a writer unit to write the received image data in a memory medium, a memory unit for storing an ID for identification for each of the portable devices, and a transmitter unit to automatically transmit the ID to the fixed camera without user input and at constant time intervals. Each of the portable devices also includes a transmit turn-off unit which stops the transmitter unit from automatically transmitting the ID to the fixed camera without user input. This is done in response to a user operation. Further, the fixed camera includes a receiver unit that receives the ID from the portable devices, an image pick-up unit to start image pick-up operations when receiving the ID, and a transmitter unit to transmit the photographed image data to each of the portable devices.

At least one benefit achieved by the camera system of independent claim 1 is an ability for users to take snapshots while showing their natural expressions, without having to pay any attention to the camera itself. Furthermore, users have an

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ability to control the portable device such that the ID is not transmitted to the camera if they do not wish to have their pictures taken. See paragraph [0029] of the published application.

The Office Action alleges that the combination of Cohen and Needham discloses all of the features recited in independent claim 1. The Office Action admits, however, that Cohen fails to disclose the memory unit storing an ID for identification of the portable device and transmitting the ID to the camera at intervals of a constant time. Nonetheless, the Office Action alleges that Needham discloses the use of a memory unit that stores an ID for identification of a device and transmitting the ID to a camera at intervals of constant time. The Office Action further alleges that Needham teaches a preference for the use of a memory unit that stores an ID for identification of a device and transmitting the ID to a camera at intervals of constant time in order to increase the distance that the ID information can be read by the camera. Reference is directed to column 2, lines 24-35; and column 2, line 59 to column 3, line 10.

Applicants' review of the references suggests otherwise. Needham discloses a system for automatically annotating digital images that includes an electronic capture device for capturing a digital representation of a scene, an information tag device to store identification data for identifying the scene, and a tag reader device that receives the identification data from the information tag device. Contrary to the assertions made in the Office Action, the ID information of Needham is not used to identify the portable devices. Rather, the ID is used to identify the location where the scenery is being shot by the camera. The ID of Needham is generated by a tag device installed at the location where the picture is being taken. Further, Needham does not transmit the ID information at constant time intervals. Rather, Needham

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appears to describe an embodiment wherein the RFID information tag is an active tag that contains its own power supply, thereby allowing it to continually transmit the ID information. In contrast, the ID provided in independent claim 1 is used to identify the portable device in order to associate images shot using a fixed camera at a predetermined photographing location with the particular portable device. The present invention also includes a transmit shut-off unit that allows the user to stop the transmitter from transmitting the ID. The combination of references simply fails to provide any disclosure or suggestion for features recited in independent claim 1, such as:

a transmitter unit to automatically transmit the ID to the fixed camera without user input, at intervals of constant time; and

a transmit turn-off unit to stop the transmitter unit from automatically transmitting the ID to the fixed camera without user input, in response to a user operation;

It is therefore respectfully submitted that independent claim 1 is allowable over the art of record.

Claims 2-5 depend from independent claim 1, and are therefore believed allowable for at least the reasons set forth above with respect to independent claim 1. In addition, these claims each introduce novel elements that independently render them patentable over the art of record.

As amended, independent claim 6 defines a camera system having a plurality of portable devices and a server. According to independent claim 6:

each of the portable devices comprising:

a memory unit to store an ID for identification of each of the portable devices;

a transmitter unit to automatically transmit the ID to the fixed camera without user input, at intervals of constant time; and

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a transmit turn-off unit to stop the transmitter unit from automatically transmitting the ID to the fixed camera without user input, in response to a user operation; the fixed camera comprising:

a receiver unit to receive the ID from the portable devices;

an image pick-up unit to start its image pick-up operation when receiving the ID; and

a transmitter unit to transmit the ID and the photographed image data to the server; and

the server comprising:

a receiver unit to receive the ID and the image data from the fixed camera;

a memory unit to store information indicative of the ID and a transmission destination of the image data corresponding to the ID; and

a transmitter unit to transmit the received image data to the transmission destination.

According to various features of independent claim 6, each portable device includes a memory unit to store ID for identification of the portable devices, a transmitter unit for automatically transmitting the ID to the fixed camera without user input at constant time intervals, and a transmit turn-off unit to stop the transmitter unit from automatically transmitting the ID to the fixed camera without user input, in response to a user operation. As previously discussed, the combination of references fails to provide an ID as defined by the claimed invention. The references also fail to provide a transmit turn-off unit to stop the transmitter unit from automatically transmitting the ID to the fixed camera without user input.

It is therefore respectfully submitted that independent claim 6 is allowable over the art of record.

Claims 7, 8, 16, and 17 depend from independent claim 6, and are therefore believed allowable for at least the reasons set forth above with respect to

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independent claim 6. In addition, these claims each introduce novel elements that independently render them patentable over the art of record.

As amended, independent claim 10 defines a portable device in a camera system having a plurality of portable devices and a fixed camera. The portable device comprises:

- a memory unit to store an ID for identification of the portable device;

- a transmitter unit to automatically transmit the ID to the fixed camera at intervals of a constant time without user input;

- a receiver unit to receive image data taken by the fixed camera according to the ID;

- a write unit to write the received image data in a memory medium; and

- a transmit turn-off unit to stop the transmitter unit from automatically transmitting the ID to the fixed camera without user input, in response to a user operation.

The portable device of independent claim 10 includes various features that are somewhat similar to those recited in independent claim 1. In particular, the portable device includes a transmitter unit, receiver unit, and a transmit turn-off unit. As previously discussed, these features are not disclosed or suggested by the art of record.

It is therefore respectfully submitted that independent claim 10 is allowable over the art of record.

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V. Conclusion

For the reasons stated above, it is respectfully submitted that all of the pending claims are now in condition for allowance. Therefore, the issuance of a Notice of Allowance is believed in order, and courteously solicited.

If the Examiner believes that there are any matters which can be resolved by way of either a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney at the number indicated below.

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AUTHORIZATION

Applicants request any shortage or excess in fees in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, and for which no other form of payment is offered, be charged or credited to Deposit Account No. 01-2135 (Case: 500.42938X00).

Respectfully submitted,
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